MARVEL

6

LGY#171

DONNY CATES • RYAN STEGMAN • JP MAYER • FRANK MARTIN

VENOM

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DISGRACED REPORTER **EDDIE BROCK** STUMBLED UPON AN AGGRESSIVE ALIEN ORGANISM, CALLED THE SYMBIOTE, DURING ONE OF THE LOWEST POINTS OF HIS LIFE. SHARING A SIMILAR NEED FOR JUSTICE IN THE FORM OF VENGANCE, THE SYMBIOTE BONDED WITH EDDIE AND THEIR UNION GRANTED HIM POWERS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF SPIDER-MAN, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF OTHER UNIQUE ABILITIES. TOGETHER, THEY NOW FIGHT CRIME AS THE WICKED WEB-SLINGER CALLED

VENOM

CENTURIES AGO, A SYMBIOTE DRAGON FROM THE COSMOS TERRORIZED ANCIENT MAN.

CREATED BY KNULL, GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES, THE CREATURE WAS BESTED, ENTOMBED IN ICE, AND EVENTUALLY UNEARTHED BY **S.H.I.E.L.D.**, WHO EXTRACTED SAMPLES OF IT TO CREATE A PLATOON OF SYMBIOTIC SOLDIERS.

WHEN THE ORGANIZATION COLLAPSED, THE DRAGON WAS RELEASED INTO AN UNSUSPECTING NEW YORK AND BEGAN SEARCHING FOR THE PIECES OF ITSELF S.H.I.E.L.D. EXTRACTED – AND IT FOUND THEM, SAVE FOR ONE.

STILL BONDED TO ITS INITIAL HOST, A MAN NAMED REX STRICKLAND, THE FINAL SYMBIOTIC SAMPLE IS ALL THE DRAGON NEEDS TO MAKE ITSELF WHOLE AND RETURN TO SPACE. PREPARED FOR SUCH AN EVENTUALITY, REX HAS BEEN STOCKPILING ANTI-SYMBIOTE WEAPONRY FOR YEARS.

BUT REX HAS A SECRET – HE IS NO LONGER HUMAN. HIS SYMBIOTE CONSUMED HIS PYHSICAL BODY YEARS AGO, AND WHAT'S LEFT OF HIS PSYCHE REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

WITH LITTLE CHOICE, **VENOM** ABSORBED THE STRICKLAND SYMBIOTE INTO HIS OWN, AND MADE HIMSELF READY FOR WAR…

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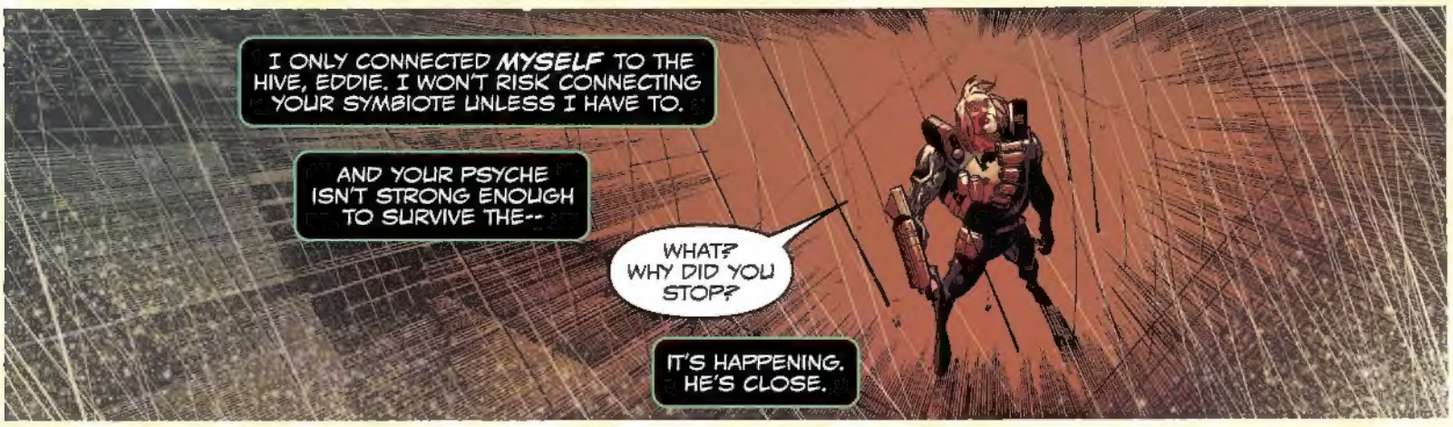
I KNOW WHAT SCARES YOU, EDDIE.
I'M INSIDE OF YOUR MIND, AND I KNOW NOW.
I KNOW WHO EDDIE BROCK IS.
EDDIE BROCK. REX STRICKLAND. VENOM. WE ARE ONE.
I CAN HELP YOU FIGHT THIS MONSTER.
I CAN HELP YOU BEAT BACK THIS DARKNESS AND THE THING THAT LIVES INSIDE OF IT.
BUT THIS FEAR THAT'S COILED UP INSIDE OF YOU...
...THAT'S SOMETHING YOU GOTTA FACE ALONE.
AND HAND TO GOD, SON...
...I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW SCARED THAT MUST MAKE YOU...

...BECAUSE BEING ALONE IS THE THING YOU FEAR THE MOST.
DO ME A FAVOR, REX.
LET'S KILL US A DRAGON CONTROLLED BY AN ELDER GOD BEFORE YOU START PLAYING THERAPIST, YEAH?
SORRY, KID. YOUR MIND IS AN OPEN WOUND.
MY SPECIES IS BUILT TO EXPAND INSIDE OF YOUR PSYCHE AND FIX ANY PROBLEMS WE CAN--
REX.
SHUT UP.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
KNULL IS USING THE DRAGON TO LOOK FOR ME. AND YOU. I CAN FEEL HIM SOARING AROUND THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE, SNIFFING AROUND FOR US.
WHAT HAPPENS NOW IS I RECONNECT TO THE HIVE.
AND I CALL HIM.

... OKAY. LET'S DO IT.

REX? WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
I'M NOT. I DID IT.
OH. I THOUGHT...I THOUGHT THERE'D BE...
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE...YOU KNOW, INTENSE.

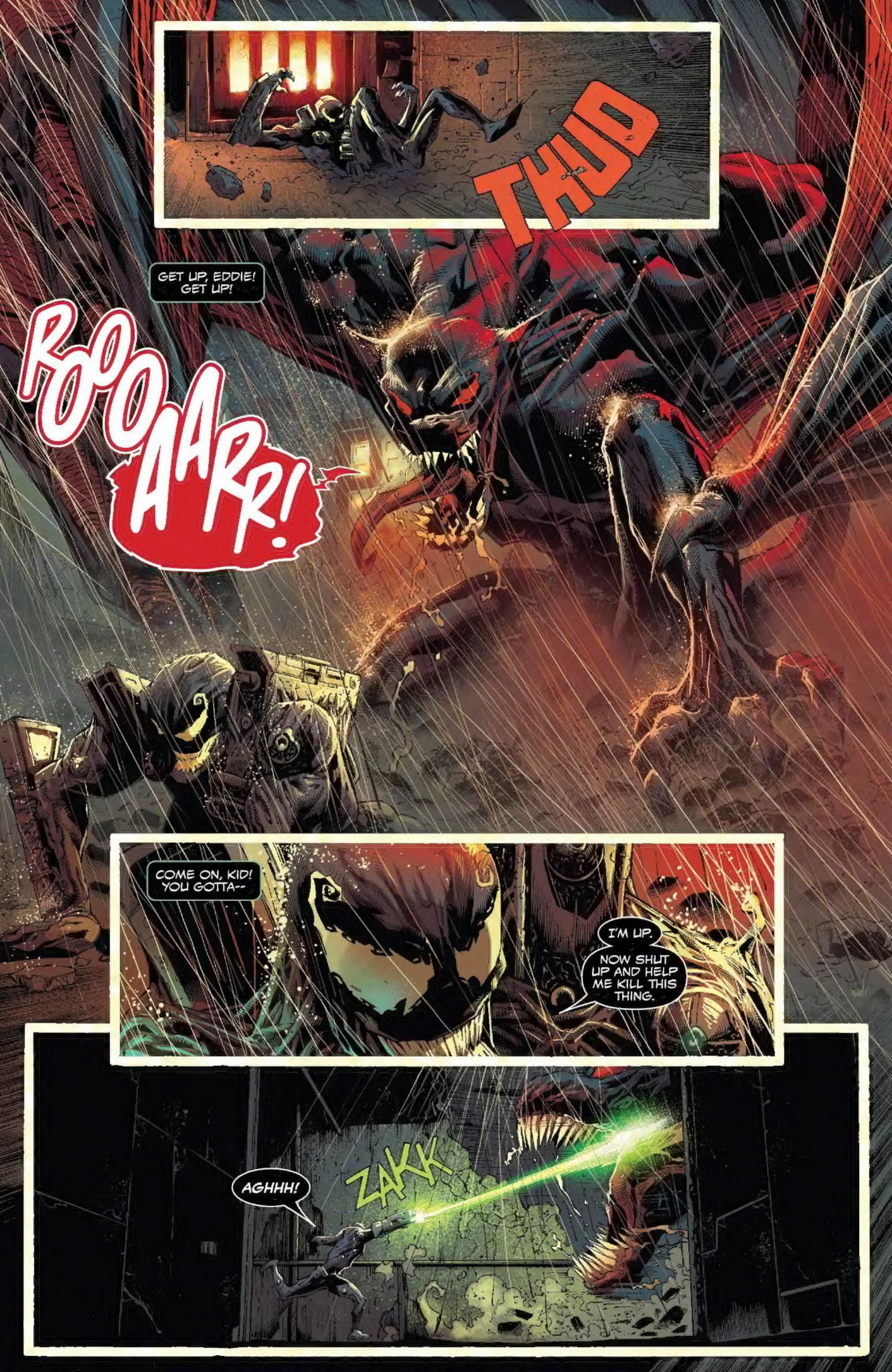

I ONLY CONNECTED MYSELF TO THE HIVE, EDDIE. I WON'T RISK CONNECTING YOUR SYMBIOTE UNLESS I HAVE TO.
AND YOUR PSYCHE ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO SURVIVE THE--
WHAT? WHY DID YOU STOP?
IT'S HAPPENING. HE'S CLOSE.

GOD IS COMING.
NO...

GOD IS HERE!

KRAK

OOM


THUD
GET UP, EDDIE! GET UP!
ROOOAARR!
COME ON, KID! YOU GOTTA--
I'M UP. NOW SHUT UP AND HELP ME KILL THIS THING.
AGHHH!
ZAKK

RAGH!
REX! LITTLE--AGH-- HELP?!

I'M ON IT, KID.

BEEN HANGING ONTO THESE SONIC GRENADES FOR JUST SUCH AN OCCASION.
STOLE THESE BABIES FROM S.H.I.E.L.D.

THEY STOLE 'EM FROM AN OUTFIT YOU TANGLED WITH A FEW YEARS BACK, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN...
POP
POP

...CALLED THEMSELVES THE JURY.
TOSS
TOSS

OKAY. DRAGON IS DOWN, THE CONNECTION IS INTERRUPTED. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS...
YEAH...

...HIM.
AHHHH, LITTLE HOST.
YOU HAVE SOMETHING I NEED.
GOOD.
COME GET IT.

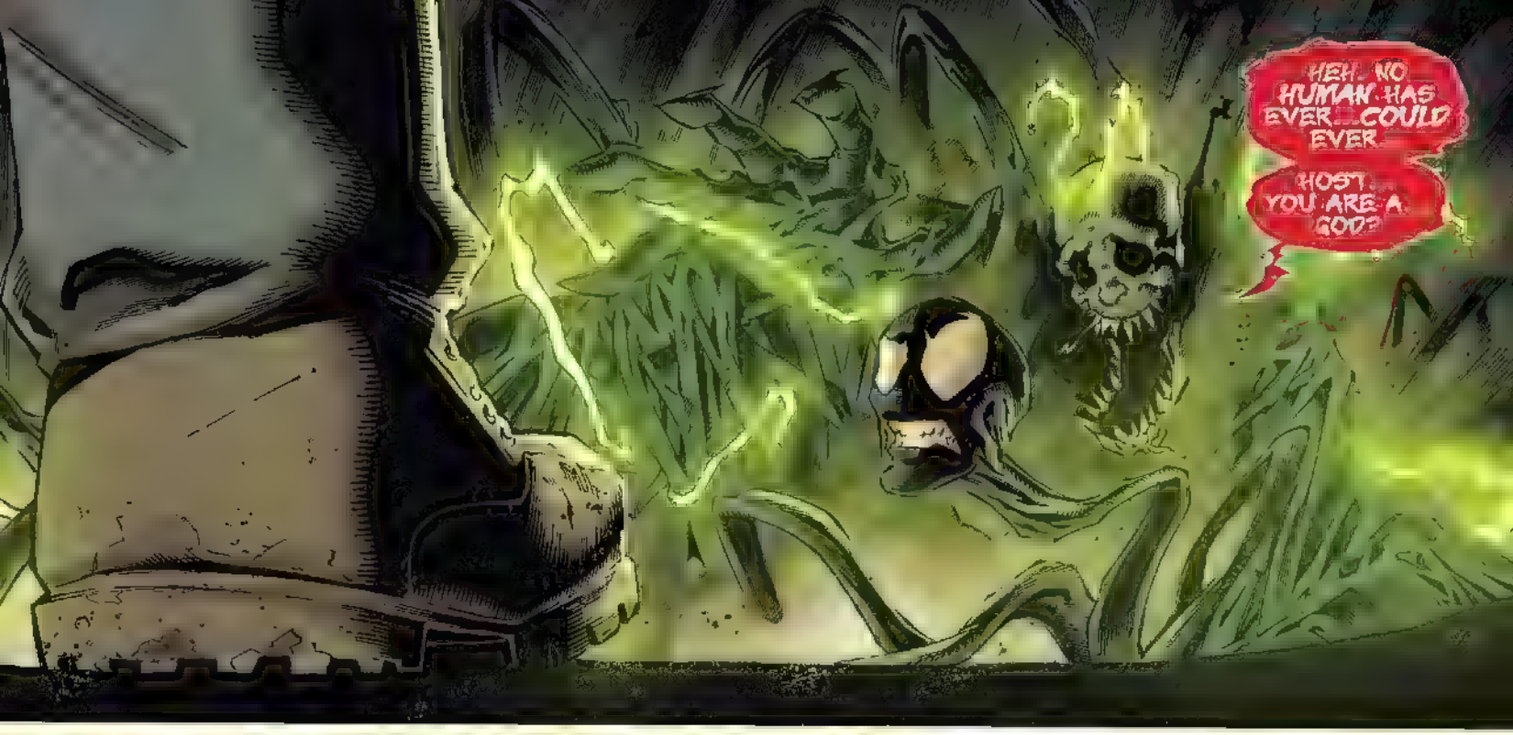
REX GOES QUIET. THE ROOM GOES BLACK.
AND SUDDENLY WE DON'T HAVE TO TALK.
REX, ME AND MY SHADOW ALL RAGE AGAINST THE END LIKE A CAGED ANIMAL.
TEETH, MACHINE GUNS AND BLOOD AGAINST THE FIRST GOD OF THE ABYSS.
AND RIGHT THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL OF IT, SOMETHING HITS ME.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO LIVE FOR.
YOU HAVE A PIECE OF ME INSIDE OF YOU HOST.
SLATCH
AAGH!
SLUTCH
BROOOOOOOOO
I DON'T KNOW IF I'M A GOOD MAN. OR IF I CAN EVER BE ONE.
YOU THINK THIS MAKES YOU STRONGER GIVES YOU A CHANCE.

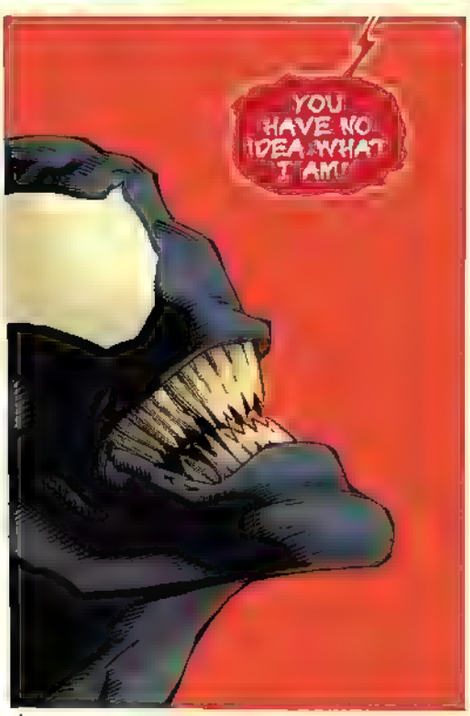
BUT I KNOW ONE THING.
THAT I CANNOT CONTROL YOU.
BUT I DO NOT HAVE TO CONTROL YOU TO ROB YOU OF WHAT I WANT.
NO!
I KNOW IT WITH EVERY BLOW I TAKE. WITH EVERY BONE I BREAK.
WITH EVERY DROP OF MY BLOOD THAT FILLS MY MOUTH.
YOU ARE NOTHING.
WITH EVERY BREATH IN MY LUNGS.
YOUR SYMBIOTE IS MINE!
I WILL BE FREE!

I'M NOT READY TO GIVE IN TO THE DARKNESS.
HEH...
YOU WANT IT? IT'S YOURS. BUT THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW.

I'M NOT READY TO DIE.
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
IT'S NOT A SYMBIOTE...

NOT TODAY.
...IT'S A COFFIN.





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I AM YOUR GOD!
AND YOU WILL OBEY ME!
AGH!
NO! YOU DARE!
KID!
REX?
NOW, EDDIE! WHILE HE'S WEAK!
THE BLAST DOORS! NOW!

CREAKKKK
I CAN FEEL THE HEAT AS SOON AS I GET CLOSE.
THIS WAREHOUSE USED TO FORGE STEEL BEAMS. THIS BLAST FURNACE IS LIKE TOUCHING THE SUN.
COME ON!
NOTHING WOULD SURVIVE IN THERE.
RAAGGHH!
NOTHING.
CLOSE THE DOOR, KID! NOW!
RAAGGH!
I FEEL MY OTHER SCREAM AS I PRESS AGAINST THE DOORS.
IT MIXES WITH THE SOUND OF A GOD BURNING TO DEATH BEHIND ME.
AGH!

EDDIE! THE FIRE!
I KNOW! I JUST...HAVE... TO...HOLD!
HAVE TO...
RAGGHH!
EDDIE, I CAN'T PROTECT YOU!
YOU'RE BURNING, EDDIE!
WE CAN'T TAKE MORE OF THIS!
WE'LL DIE!

GO INSIDE. I'LL PROTECT YOU.
TURN OFF ALL OF MY PAIN RECEPTORS.
BUT EDDIE...
NOW!
EDDIE, THERE'S SO MUCH PAIN INSIDE OF YOU.
I CAN'T FIX IT ALL. IT'S TOO MUCH!
WE CANNOT COME BACK FROM THIS.
JUST--GRAH!--JUST KEEP ME ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO KILL THIS SON OF A #$@#%.
AGHHH!
KRRRRR!

WE DID IT, EDDIE. KNULL'S CONNECTION TO HIS SYMBIOTE IS FAILING.
HE'S GONE. I CAN FEEL IT...
THEY ARE BOTH... GONE.
AGH!
I'M SORRY, EDDIE...
IT WAS TOO MUCH...
WE WERE STILL... CONNECTED...
I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU...
W-WHAT?
I LOVE YOU, EDDIE.
I...I CAN'T HEAR YOU...
WH-WHERE...

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SEND E-MAILS TO **SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM** (PLEASE MARK "OKAY TO PRINT"!)

Welcome back, Venomaniacs, to another installment of Eddie's Clubhouse – your #1 stop for any and all things VENOM, and with this issue, we bring our first arc in this new volume to a close!

It's been a big year for the Wicked Web-slinger! Not only is it the 30th Anniversary of his very first appearance, he's been the star of not one but TWO weekly shipping comics events, a new series of oversized stories called WEB OF VENOM, AND even received a fresh #1 courtesy of Donny Cates, Ryan Stegman, JP Mayer, Frank Martin, and Clayton Cowles to welcome a whole new generation of Venomaniacs to our ranks!

Plus he got WINGS! Truly, it's the SUMMER OF VENOM.

All that, AND his first-ever starring role in a motion picture will be hitting a theater near you in just a few weeks.

Guess Hollywood is finally catching up to your pals here at the House of Ideas!

And trust me when I tell you that this is just the beginning. We've got a whole lot up our sleeves for the next year or two or three or ten for your favorite sinister symbiote, so keep reading, keep writing to SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM to let us know how we're doing, and keep telling your comic shop that you want the best, and the best is VENOM!

BUT! Enough talk of what's to come, let's take a look back at where we've been these last six issues. This is our VERY FIRST column in this new volume of Venom to include your letters, and the mailbag has been overflowing, so let's dive right in.

Hey, guys,

I really like the storyline you are all doing with the true origin of the symbiote/Klyntar race.

I'm really liking how, because of the short but brief connection the Venom symbiote made to Knull, he was made stronger.

It's amazing that now he's not only stronger but he can also fly?! That is insane.

I really love the art direction the artists over there did and I really appreciate the work the writers and artists have done so far.

So looking forward to the new issue!

Sincerely,
Andrew

INSANE is the only word for it, Andrew. Thanks for reading, and for writing – and for your kind words!

VENOM Team,

Thank you!

I have slowly fallen in love with comic books over the past few years and Venom quickly became one of my favorite villains, then characters, of all time (neck and neck with the notorious Doctor Doom).

I'm nineteen years old and am an aspiring artist who would love nothing more than to publish my own graphic novels one day. I was recently diagnosed with schizophrenia and it can be hard to deal with at times but nothing distracts and encourages me more than the new Venom series.

I would like to personally thank Donny Cates for breathing life into a series that completely captivates and inspires me, and all the artists as well for making such beautiful, dark scenes. A symbiotic dragon is the coolest thing I've ever seen, and issue #4 left me awestruck trying to comprehend the origin of the Klyntar. I absolutely love the horror aspect of this series, and it is everything I could ever imagine.

From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU!

Christopher R.

Hi, Christopher. Thanks for writing, and for sharing your story. It REALLY means a lot to all of us here on Team Venom that this little funny book about an alien who fires webs out of his hands and grew wings made such a positive impact on your life! We hope your journey into comics fandom is just as rewarding as Venom has been. Matter of fact, we're all sure it will be!

DEAR VENOM CREW,

WOW! All I gotta say is WOW!

So, after reading VENOM #1 I've got my faith rekindled with how Marvel has been handling some of their characters.

Donny Cates really wrote something that I haven't seen for a VERY long time. And together Donny and Ryan have created a story unlike any Venom story I've ever read. The fact that we hear the symbiote actually talk with Eddie is something I've never read before and to hear it going crazy is something ELSE I've never read before. A lot of times Eddie would talk to the symbiote and would kinda respond to it as if it said something in his head.

Now to get to Ryan Stegman's art. AMAZING! To see this kind of art nowadays is extremely rare because it is so grim and gritty but also very detailed and just flat-out cool-looking. Ryan does an excellent amalgamation of both Todd Mcfarlane and Erik Larsen's Venom. He mixes in the pure black Venom with very minimal tongue of Todd along with very sharp teeth and super long tongue of Erik. It looks really cool to say the least because I love both versions of Venom.

Keep it up, fellas, this is a book dedicated to hardcore Venom fans and a big love letter for Marvel fans in general. Thanks, guys!

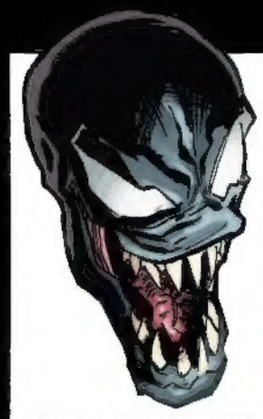
MAKE MINE MARVEL!
Marc G.
Orlando

Hey, Marc! Thanks for your letter and for reading. Believer it or not, Venom and Eddie have had a dialogue for a few years, now, and diving into collected editions of VENOM: SPACEKNIGHT by Robbie Thompson or VENOM by Mike Costa, Gerardo Sandoval, and Mark Bagley might give you a good VENOM fix while you're waiting on the next issue from Cates, Stegman, Mayer and Cowles!

Hey VENOM Team,

As a long time Spider-Man fan and avid reader, Venom is one of my favorite characters in the Marvel Universe and has been ever since I read my dad's issues of "Lethal Protector"!

He's a complex character and it's hard to capture his style but this new series has nailed it! Ever since Flash Thompson traveled to the Planet of the Symbiotes in the



Eddie's Clubhouse

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Guardians of the Galaxy I've been extremely curious about Venom's origins and the extraterrestrial side of his backstory. Finding out the meaning of "Klyntar" and that Venom's home planet is a cage to keep in a symbiote dragon absolutely blew my mind! Keep up the great work guys!

Anthony B.
Mesa, AZ

As you've learned by now, Anthony, that cage holds something much darker and dangerous than any symbiotic dragon... KNULL, THE SYMBIOTE GOD, IS COMING!

And here's a very nice letter from an international reader – Eduardo, from Guatemala!

VENOM Team,

I can honestly say that this first arc is one of my favorites of all time... Donny Cates is doing fantastic work with this first story of Venom 2018, and the art from Ryan Stegman is great, nothing less.

I think it is hard to create new characters and do them memorably, but Knull has this horrible and bloody way of being that I will remember for a long time.

Eduardo B., proud to say I Am Venom.
Guatemala

And we're proud to have you say it, Eduardo! Thanks for being a Venomaniac!

Hi there, everyone in the Marvel offices,

After 30 years of Venom in my life I have finally taken to sending in an email.

Having just read issue #4 (169) I am loving the direction that you are taking Eddie and his partner. While I miss Flash, Eddie is the one and true host! The artwork and storytelling keep on reeling me in.

However, I have one thing that has vexed me since issue 3. Venom has the spider mark on his chest. This is to symbolize the spider-powers he gained after being bonded to Spider-Man. Why on Earth does Knull have a symbol of a dragon looks like that the spider on Venom's chest? This doesn't make sense as numerous Klyntar have been seen without them and in my view this was a poor design choice.

Keep up the good work.

Andrew
Milton K.
England

Hi, Milton! Thanks for reading and for writing. It's always great to get word from Venom fans who've been with the character since the beginning.

That's an interesting point you raise about the symbol on Eddie's chest, but I'll counter it with a question:

Knull and the Venom symbiote are clearly connected, and we've seen that Knull's presence, or even that of his emissary the dragon, can affect Venom.

So, my question is this: why do you assume that that only goes one way?

On that note, let's dive into our last letter! This time from a reader who's enthusiasm for Venom rivals even my own!

Dear V team,

WOW! Just wow! In the early '90s I got into comic books because of Venom. Since then, I have read EVERYTHING and purchased/collected almost everything (there might be a few appearances and/or issues I might have missed). Back in the early nineties Venom's '95 annual told us readers the origin of the Symbiote race and Venom's Symbiote. I LOVED IT! Knull's tale goes back further and is AWESOME.

Explaining the reasoning behind the weakness to fire and sound, also where the white spider logo came from all those years ago, was nicely done, and the twist with the Klyntar name? Bravo (I'm actually applauding).

Can past characters and groups return from previous Venom books? Like: the Jury, Pyre, Mace, Xenophage species, the Stalkers, Dr. Serge Yesenofsky, the suit (from Daniel Way's 2003 run), Bob's group (also from Daniel Way's 2003 run), Symbiote Slayers, Lord Orge, Scorn, the Agents of the Cosmos, Haze Manzer and the Poisons are just a few I'd like to see come back for a little cameo or hardcore revenge.

I can't wait to read what happens next. Thanks for keeping the V-man alive and kicking in comic book form.

Travis J.

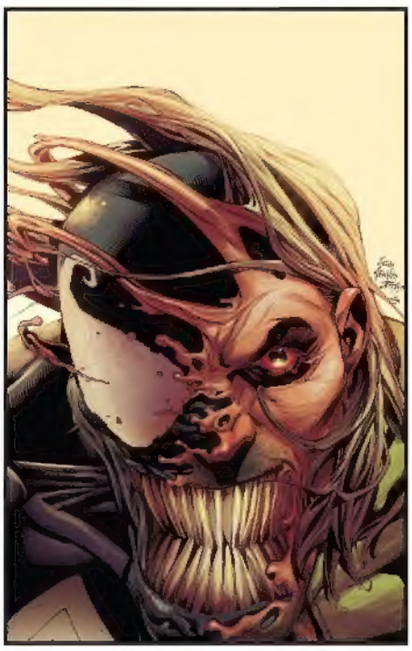
I've got some good news and bad news for you, Travis. THE GOOD NEWS! Is that Donny and I have, at some point, discussed just about ALL of those characters. The bad news is that not all of them might survive...

And on that note, let's call it closed for this one! My laptop's about to die, and I skipped dinner to write this for you lunatics.

Join us next month for the first of two issues by Donny and guest illustrator Iban Coello! And remember:

#WEAREVENOM

Stay sharp!
Devin
@edevinlewis



VENOM #7

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